

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.121 as follows (see the accompanying "marked-up" version pursuant to §1.121):

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1. (Thrice Amended) An absorbent article comprising:

a main body including a liquid-pervious top sheet, a back sheet and an absorbent core sandwiched between the top sheet and the back sheet;

a layer containing a skin-protective ingredient for forming an oily film on skin of a wearer; and

a support layer for covering said layer containing said skin-protective ingredient, and said support layer being provided on a surface of said main body for contacting the skin of the wearer, wherein;

the solubility in water of said support layer is promoted at 25°C or higher, and/or the moisture absorbability or the solubility in water of said support layer is promoted at a relative humidity of at least 30 %.

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3. (Thrice Amended) The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1,

wherein the layer containing the skin-protective ingredient is formed of a compound capable of forming said oily film on the skin of the wearer.

8. (New) An absorbent article comprising:

a main body including a liquid-pervious top sheet, a back sheet and an absorbent core sandwiched between the top sheet and the back sheet;

a skin-protective ingredient containing layer containing a skin-protective ingredient for forming an oily film on skin of a wearer, said skin-protective ingredient containing layer being in a liquified state at 35 °C or higher; and

a support layer for covering said skin-protective ingredient containing layer, and said support layer being provided on a surface of said main body for contacting the skin of the wearer, wherein;

the solubility in water of said support layer is promoted at 25 °C or higher, and/or the moisture absorbability or the solubility in water of said support layer is promoted at a relative humidity of at least 30%.

9. (New) An absorbent article comprising:

a main body including a liquid-pervious top sheet, a back sheet and an absorbent core sandwiched between the top sheet and the back sheet;

a skin-protective ingredient containing layer containing a skin-protective ingredient for forming an oily film on skin of a wearer; and

a support layer for covering said skin-protective ingredient containing layer and placed on a surface of said main body for contacting the skin of the wearer, said support layer being formed

of at least one compound selected from among a group consisting of polyethylene oxide having a molecular weight of from 100 to 500,000, polypropylene glycol having a molecular weight of from 100 to 10,000, and polyvinyl alcohol having a degree of polymerization of from 300 to 4000 and a degree of saponification of from 50 to 99 for providing water solubility at a temperature higher than or equal to 25 °C and for enhancement of moisture absorbability or the solubility in water at a relative humidity of at least 30%.

10. (New) An absorbent article comprising:

a main body including a liquid-pervious top sheet, a back sheet and an absorbent core sandwiched between the top sheet and the back sheet,

a skin-protective ingredient containing layer containing a skin-protective ingredient for forming an oily film on skin of a wearer, said skin-protective ingredient containing layer being in a liquified state at 35 °C or higher; and

a support layer for covering said skin-protective ingredient containing layer and placed on a surface of said main body to be in contact with skin of the wearer said support layer being formed of at least one compound selected from among a group consisting of polyethylene oxide having a molecular weight of from 100 to 500,000, polypropylene glycol having a molecular weight of from 100 to 10,000, and polyvinyl alcohol having a degree of polymerization of from 300 to 4000 and a degree of saponification of from 50 to 99 for providing water solubility at a

temperature higher than or equal to 25 °C and for enhancement of moisture absorbability or the solubility in water at a relative humidity of at least 30 %.

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11. (New) The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1, wherein the support layer is formed of at least one compound selected from the group consisting of polyethylene oxide having a molecular weight of from 100 to 500,000, and polypropylene glycol having a molecular weight of from 100 to 10,000.
